

0 3/

A

# CHARGE

Delivered at the

## ORDINATION

OF THE

Reverend Mr. *JOHN RICE*,

AT

*MIDHURST*,

September *the 24<sup>th</sup>*, 1735.

---

*By* JOHN NORMAN.

---



---

LONDON,

*Printed for* RICHARD FORD, *at the Angel in the*  
*Poultry.* 1735. (Price 6 d.)

БИБЛИОТЕКА

D. L. 10-10-10

100

T 2 2 U H Q 1 1

2731 1940 10 15

И А М Д О / К Н О [ ]

JAN 20 1967

Printed & Published by  
-Merrill, 1735.



AN  
ADVERTISEMENT  
TO THE  
READER.

**I**T may not be improper to say, That this Charge is printed as I deliver'd it, only with the Alteration of a single Word here and there, and a very few Sentences thrown in where, upon a Review, I thought there was a Deficiency.

Should what I have offered be of Use to any of my younger Brethren, and give those who are, in a great Measure, Strangers to what is done among the Dissenters at their Ordinations, a more

iv *An Advertisement, &c.*

*favourable Opinion of their Ministry, than is too generally receiv'd, this is all I aim at; nor shall I give my self the Trouble of making an Apology for this Publication. If the Performance be such as may answer any valuable Purposes, I cannot see what Need I have to excuse my sending it to the Press; and if it should be thought too mean to be of any Service, an Attempt that way will be of very little Signification. The World must now take it as it is; and all are welcome to read or neglect it, as they are disposed. I shall only add; that my Design, as far as I know my self, is honest: And I heartily wish that Ministers, of all Denominations, may conscientiously endeavour to discharge their Duty, and that I may be found faithful.*

J. N.

A





A

# CHARGE

Delivered at an

## ORDINATION, &c.

**I**T is a Pleasure to such as wish well to Christianity, and have the flourishing State of Religion, in Generations to come, at Heart, to see that while many *Ministers* go to the Grave worn out with Age and Labour, and some are called off the Stage in the midst of their Usefulness; God is pleased to incline the Hearts of others, to devote themselves to his Service in that Character; and we rejoice, dear Brother, that you are one of the Number.

We take it for granted, Sir, that before you determined about this, you well con-

## 6     *A Charge at the Ordination of*

sider'd the *awful Nature* of the *Work* in which you have engaged, and the *Discouragements* attending it; especially at a Time, when serious Piety is so visibly upon the Decline; when so many Disputes arise, and some of them are managed with so much Warmth, and so little Decency; when Charity is languishing, and there are so few who shew a hearty Concern for a Cause, which they will allow to be the Cause of God.

And as you have now been, at your earnest Request, invested in your *Office*; we perswade our selves, that you have acted in this whole Affair under the Influence of the best Principles; and that your Views are such as they should be. This we can easily believe; and therefore hope, that the Blessing of God will attend you; that you will be assisted and encouraged by our great Master, whose Servant you have the Honour to be; and that, having the Guidance, Direction, and Help of the Divine Spirit, you will be made very Useful in the Church, and to many Souls.

The *Validity* of your *Ordination* is a Point which, without Doubt, you are fully satisfied in, and capable of defending: While some (and even among *Protestants* themselves) are fond of a *Scheme* which makes an *uninterrupted Succession* of Officers *superior to Presbyters*, (a Succession that

that cannot possibly be proved<sup>a</sup>) *essential* to a *regular Mission*; and think no *Orders* sufficient, but those given upon that Foot; no such Difficulties embarrass you; you having been ordained according to Rules laid down in the *New Testament*, as far as we are capable of understanding them; and as *Timothy* was, by the laying on of the *Hands of the Presbytery*<sup>b</sup>. But it is not my Business, at present, to go into that Argument.

That which I have before me, Sir, is to offer some Things relating to your *Management* as a Minister of Jesus Christ. I am sensible that I am no Way equal to such an Undertaking; nor, indeed, can Justice be done to so great and extensive a Subject, without much Labour, and by a masterly Pen. All that I pretend to is, to suggest a few *Advices*, and that in a plain and artless Manner; and to enforce them by such *Motives* as ought to awaken all that minister in holy Things, to a conscientious Discharge of their Duty. And as it was by your Desire that I consented to undertake this Part of the Service of the Day; I am sure you will excuse the Freedom I shall use in this Address; nor can I question

<sup>a</sup> *Preservative* against the Principles, &c. of the Nonjurors; By the now Right Reverend Lord Bishop of Winchester.

<sup>b</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 14.

## 8    *A Charge at the Ordination of*

my being heard by all my Reverend Brethren, here present, with Candour.

And now give me Leave, Sir, to put you in mind of the Words of the illustrious St. Paul, which you have often read in the second Epistle to *Timothy*, Chap. iv. 3. *Make full Proof of thy Ministry.* This great Apostle's Language before, is of a very solemn Nature; *I charge thee*, says he, *before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and Dead at his appearing, and his Kingdom: Preach the Word; be instant in Season and out of Season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all Long-suffering and Doctrine.*— *Watch thou in all Things; endure Affliction; do the Work of an Evangelist.*— And then he subjoins this general and comprehensive Exhortation: *Make full Proof of thy Ministry.*

My Design in referring you to these Words, is to excite you to endeavour, in every Respect, to approve your self a Minister of Christ, to maintain the Dignity of your sacred Character, and the Honour of your Office, and not to neglect any Thing that God requires, and the Church may expect from you. The Particulars I have to recommend, are these which follow, viz. *Be diligent in your Studies; frequent and fervent in Prayer; faithful in all the Duties of your holy Calling; exemplary in your Life and Conversation; zealous for the Truth,*  
and



*the Reverend Mr. Rice.* 9

*and stedfast to the End.* Allow me to offer something to you under each of these Heads; and wherein I come short, pray supply the rest in your own Meditations.

1. I call upon you, my Brother, to be *diligent in your Studies.* Where there is the best Preparation for the Ministry, you must be very sensible, that as there is Room for, so there will be Need of, daily Improvement. I shall not mention the several Parts of Learning in which you may employ your Time to the best Advantage, and which will best reward the Pains you may be at about them. But there is one Thing concerning which I must take the Liberty to be your Remembrancer, and that is, that a search into the *sacred writings*, which contain an inexhaustible Fund of divine Knowledge, is Business enough for a whole Life; supposing it to be stretch'd to a greater Length than we can ever expect to reach; So that this should be, in a particular Manner, apply'd to, and to this all your other Studies ought to be made subservient. There is a vast Depth in the *inspired Books*; and a *Treasure* to be found there, which we must dig deep to come at; but the Toil is glorious, and will be abundantly recompensed. There we meet with Truths the most important, and Discoveries that will enlarge the Mind, and at the same Time feed and feast it. *The sacred Pages*



## 10 *A Charge at the Ordination of*

give a noble Pleasure to the studious and contemplative Soul: They contain the great Charter of our Happiness, and shew us the Path to Glory: They are full of Light; raise our Thoughts high, and open a Prospect into Eternity. And as from these we are to take the *Rules* we are to form our Tempers and Lives by; so in these we have the most powerful *Motives* to enforce our Duty, set in the strongest Point of View; and the greatest *Consolation*, under all the Trials of Life, and Fears of Death, offered to us. The great Work of *Redemption*, (the Origin, Progress, and Perfection of which, the *New Testament*, compared with the *Old*, acquaints us with) is a Subject full of Wonders; and these are Things which *the Angels desire to look into*<sup>c</sup>. I would observe again; That from the *Scriptures* our *ministerial Furniture* must be chiefly taken. The Apostle tells us, that *all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works*<sup>d</sup>. Moreover, we live in an Age in which the most open Attempts have been made to disgrace *Revelation*, and to bring it into Contempt. Among other Things, it has been insinuated; That there is *no Need of any other Light*, besides that of

<sup>c</sup> 1 Pet. i. 12.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 16.

*Nature* (the *Sufficiency* of which, even in our *lapsed State*, has been strenuously contended for) that the sacred Writings are *inconsistent* with themselves; that they contain things altogether *incredible*, and which are not to be reconciled with God's *moral Perfections*, &c. and that therefore they cannot be a *divine Revelation*. Now such as preach the Gospel, must be able and ready to *defend* it (as you will hear under another Head) which cannot be done without making it our Study.

By this Time, Sir, I persuade my self, I have said enough to recommend such Researches: It was the Charge of St. Paul to Timothy; Give Attendance to reading;—Meditate upon these Things; give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all<sup>c</sup>. If Persons will resolve to make themselves well acquainted with the *Scriptures*, and consult those Books, and acquire that Learning that is necessary for the right understanding of them; they will find full Employment for their Time. Those that have Congregations to take Care of, must be frequently among their People; and it would be wrong to keep themselves altogether confin'd. *Civilities* must be paid where they are due; *Friendships* that are valuable, are to be kept up and cultivated; and those innocent *Diversions* and *Exercises*, which

<sup>c</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15.

## 12 *A Charge at the Ordination of*

are necessary to keep the Body in a healthful State, and to make the Mind more fit for close and severe Study, are undoubtedly to be used. But it ought to be remember'd, that we have a great deal of Work to be done at home; and that to be, in a great Measure, a Stranger to Retirement, very ill suits the Character of one whose proper Business calls him to be much alone.

Before I dismiss this Head (in which you will observe, that the recommending a close Enquiry into the *Scriptures*, is what I have had chiefly in View) it may not be improper to say, that I am altogether a Friend to a *free Inquiry*. I own, that the Sentiments of great and learned Men should have a decent and just Regard paid them; and when ever we differ from such, it should be with Modesty and Humility. This, I think, looks very becoming, and in young Ministers especially: But, at the same Time, the *Right of every Man to judge for himself*, ought inviolably to be maintained; and if this had not been exercised, How would there have been any *Christians* or *Protestants* in the World? So that your Study of the *Scriptures* should be *free and impartial*.

And, Sir, I think my self obliged to mention one Thing more to you, in relation to this Argument; which is, that nothing can be more necessary to your understanding the *Oracles of God*, than a *Heart* disposed to

Obe-

*Obedience.* Our blessed Saviour has told us, that *if any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God.* Such a Person will throw off those *Prejudices*, which so often shut Peoples Eyes against the Light, darken their Understandings, and give them a corrupt Bias; he will love Truth, and be ready to embrace it. And as God will not fail to teach and instruct Men of Integrity and Piety; so we have Reason to conclude, from the infinite Goodness of his Nature, that what ever Mistakes they may fall into, he will preserve them from all such Errors as would to them prove fatal.

2. *Be frequent and fervent in Prayer.* St. James tells us, that *every good and perfect Gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights; with whom is no Variableness, neither Shadow or turning.* And again he writes thus: *If any of you lack Wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.* Prayer I take to be a Duty of moral, and therefore indispensable, Obligation; and required of all that are capable of addressing their Maker, and paying him this Act of Homage and Devotion. This results from God's being our *absolute Owner*, and the great *Benefactor and Friend*, to whom we are indebted for all the good

<sup>f</sup> John vii. 17.

<sup>g</sup> James i. 17.

<sup>h</sup> Ver. 5.



#### 14 *A Charge at the Ordination of*

Things we enjoy and hope for : So that such as live without acknowledging the supreme Being this Way, do thereby deny him to be what he is, and themselves to be what they are ; I mean, *dependent* Creatures. All therefore should pray ; and this Christianity obliges us to. As to Ministers, I would observe, that besides those Things which they have to ask in common with People in private Life, there are many Calls upon them of a more peculiar Nature, to have their Eyes and Hearts often lifted up to Heaven in Supplication. We want a more than ordinary Degree of Wisdom, to acquit our selves with Honour and Fidelity, in the Places we fill. Our Work is great ; and our Difficulties are many. We are obliged, in an especial Manner, to promote the spiritual and eternal Welfare of such as are under our more immediate Care, by our Prayers for, as well as by our Labours among them ; and the Variety of Circumstances we pass through our selves, as likewise the particular Cases of others, who should have a Room in our best Thoughts, will put us in Mind of being frequently with God in our Retirement. And since we believe, and must know, that the *Success* of all our Endeavours to promote the Interest of Christ, and the Salvation of Souls, depends upon a *Blessing* from above ; and that after we have plan-  
ted



ted and watered, it is God that giveth the Increase<sup>i</sup>; what can we expect, but that our *Studies* and *Labours* will be *unprofitable* and *fruitless*, if we do not, with a most sincere and ardent Devotion of Soul, put up Petitions for that Blessing? But, I hope I need not say any Thing more to you, Sir, about this; and I am satisfied you will excuse my having said so much.

3. The next Thing I would recommend to you, my Brother, is *Faithfulness in the Whole of your Ministry*. Here a copious Subject opens; but I must content my self with being very short about some Things which, had I Time, would require, and deserve, a more distinct Consideration.

*Preaching*, Sir, you must be sensible, is a great and noble Part of the Work to which you are called. The Apostles had it in Commission to *go and teach all Nations*<sup>k</sup>. This is an *Ordinance* instituted by Christ, the Head of the Church; the *Ends* of it are most excellent; its *Advantages* to Mankind vastly great; and it is what God has *own'd* in all Ages. It would be easy to make all this appear; but I shall now only say it, and especially as the Proofs are obvious.

*How* Ministers are to discharge this Part of their Office, is what I shall not aim to enter fully into; and yet it will, perhaps, be expected that something should be said

<sup>i</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 7.

<sup>k</sup> Matt. xxviii. 19.

## 16 *A Charge at the Ordination of*

about it. And, in the General, I beseech you, Sir, in the Language of St. Paul, that you would *study to shew your self approved unto God, a Workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth*<sup>1</sup>. Let the Glory of God, and the Welfare of Souls, be the great Things you aim at in composing and delivering all your Discourses. Subjects of the greatest *Importance* should be chosen and insisted on; for to neglect these for the sake of gratifying People's vain Curiosity, by leading them into *Speculations*, in a great Measure *unprofitable*, or, indeed, upon any other Considerations, is, I think, inexcusable in one that professes himself to be a Preacher of the Gospel. We have many Things of the highest Moment to lay before our Hearers; and such as they ought to be made well acquainted with. The *Being of God* is the *Basis* of all Religion; and *right Apprehensions* of his Attributes and Perfections, are necessary to render Mens Religion such as it should be; that is to say, *rational, pure and spiritual, vigorous and active, ingenuous and cheerful, uniform and lasting*. And were right Notions of the Deity inculcated and received, People would see themselves press'd by such *Motives*, to love, fear, and serve God, to submit to his Will, to trust in, and imitate him; and all these arising from the

<sup>1</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 15.

Excellencies of his Nature, and the Displays he has made of them in his Works and Word, that, as one observes, " They " would no longer look upon Religion as a " Burden, but readily embrace it as their " Ornament and Crown, their Glory and " Happiness<sup>m</sup>". So that we should endeavour to have our Minds filled with just, honourable and consistent Notions of the supreme Being; and do all we can to communicate them to others, and to shew the Necessity of entertaining them. — The Doctrine of *Providence* should be carefully explained. It is of constant Use through the Whole of a Christian's Life; and a right Temper of Mind, amidst the numberless Vicissitudes of this fluctuating and uncertain State, and a becoming Behaviour towards the great and wise Governor of the World, cannot be expected if this be not understood and well consider'd. — The *Foundation of Morality* (the Whole of which our Saviour has taken into his Religion, and taught in the highest Perfection) is a Topick of great Moment; and we should endeavour to make the People understand, as they are able, that the *Differences* between *Good* and *Evil*, *Right* and *Wrong*, *Just* and *Unjust*, are *unchangeable*, and arise from the *Reason* and *Relations* of Things, which are immutably the same. — As to the *Evidences* of

<sup>m</sup> *Scott's Christian Life, Part II. Vol. I. p. 387.*

## 18 *A Charge at the Ordination of*

*Christianity*, these must be set before our Hearers in the strongest Light ; that they may be able to give the Reasons of their Faith and Hope, and to say more for their Religion, than that it is the Religion of their Country, and that which they were brought up in by their Parents. — The *Glories of Christ*, of his *Person*, and of his *Offices*, as *Prophet*, *Priest*, and *King*, must be distinctly represented. The mighty Benefits of his Undertaking for us as *Mediator*, is a Subject which we cannot dwell too long upon ; to excite Men to all that Love, Gratitude and Duty, which such Favours call for ; and to raise in their Minds the highest Veneration and Esteem, for one of his exalted Character, as *God-man*, and which so great a Friend and Benefactor, one who offer'd up himself a *propitiatory Sacrifice* for us, may justly challenge. — The great *Design* of the Gospel must be set forth ; the *Purity* of its *End* ; its admirable Tendency to promote universal Righteousness, Benevolence and Charity ; and its Suitableness to the Necessities of Mankind ; that it may appear to be an Institution, in all Respects *worthy of God*, and of every Man's *Acceptation*. — The *Helps* we are favour'd with, who are under this gracious Dispensation, being much superior to those which *unassisted Reason*, and *natural Light*, can give us, ought to be often taken Notice of,



of, that our People may be sensible of the peculiar Obligations they are under to God on this Account, and convinced that, if they do not improve these *Helps*, they will have a *heavier Doom* than others at last.—

The *Covenant of Grace* must be opened with the greatest Clearness; the rich and inestimable *Blessings* of it display'd, and those *Terms* or *Conditions*, upon which God has declared he will accept Sinners, and admit them to Mercy, justly stated, and the *Reasonableness* of them argued; that such as reject them, may appear to be altogether *inexcusable*. *Faith* and *Repentance* are Subjects in which all are concerned, and should be frequently treated of, and an *evangelical Obedience* urged, as that without which, all the Profession any may make, is vain.

—Men are to be told, that *Sincerity* must accompany the Whole of their Religion; and that if it does not, they do but mock God, and deceive themselves.

—All the *Virtues* and *Graces* which form the Christian Character, are to be taught; and *relative Duties* should have a Place in the Course of our Ministry; nor should we, by any Means, neglect to put our Hearers in Mind, that they must *be careful to maintain good Works*; which St. Paul would have *Timothy affirm constantly*<sup>n</sup>. Should we be called *legal Preachers* for doing this, we

<sup>n</sup> Titus iii. 8.



## 20 *A Charge at the Ordination of*

need not be concern'd about it, as we have so good a Warrant, and the Example of Christ and his Apostles to justify us. And they must be very weak indeed, who will speak of us in that Manner; and especially when we let them know (as we should always take Care to do) that *we are justified freely by the Grace of God, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ*; and that nothing that we can do, is to be pleaded as a *Merit*.—— Shall I add? that every *Motive* to engage Men to do their Duty, should be urg'd with all the Force that we can give it; and particularly those which the *Gospel* furnishes the Christian Preacher with. ° “ The Talk of the *Beauty* “ of Morality, and the *natural* Connection “ of *moral*, with *natural* Good and Evil (as “ a late worthy Divine of our own ob- “ serves) is a fine Thing in Speculation, “ and an undoubted Truth in Fact; and “ upon Men of a *philosophical Make*, may “ have had some good Influence, especially “ where more powerful Motives to Virtue “ were wanting.—— But is this enough, “ where the Heart is already engaged a- “ gainst Reason, in the Party of Vice, im- “ mersed in Sensuality, enslaved to his “ Appetites and Passions, to disingage it, and “ set the Man at Liberty?—— Alas! he'll

° *Brown's Answer to Christianity as old as the Creation,*  
p. 70, 71.

“ hear

“ hear without any Regard, as one dead to  
 “ such Talk, who feels none of its Force or  
 “ Influence”. And therefore *Motives* taken  
 from the *Gospel*; such as the *matchless Love*  
 of a crucified Saviour, God’s *Readiness to*  
*pardon Sinners* for his Sake; and the *Re-*  
*wards and Punishments* of the next Life  
 must be made Use of.—— One Thing more  
 I would observe; which is, that though the  
*Assistance of the Holy Spirit* is, in our Age,  
 made very little of by too many, and ridi-  
 cul’d by some; the *Necessity* of it is, to me,  
 so plain in Scripture, that, I think, we  
 ought to appear for it as one of the *peculiar*  
*Glories* of the evangelical Dispensation;  
 and to shew the People, that their Regene-  
 ration, their Advances in the divine Life,  
 their being enabled to perform their Duty in  
 an acceptable Manner, to resist Tempta-  
 tions, to bear up, as Christians, under Af-  
 flictions, and to persevere to the End; all  
 depend upon *supernatural Grace*.—— What  
 shall I say more: You are to keep back no-  
 thing from those to whom you minister,  
 that is *profitable unto them*; nor must you  
*shun to declare all the Counsel of God*;<sup>r</sup>; but  
 deliver it freely; taking Care not to mix  
 the *Inventions* of *fallible* Men, by what  
 great Names soever they may have been  
 advanced and countenanced with Gospel  
 Truths, which ought to be kept *pure* and

## 22 *A Charge at the Ordination of*

*unadulterated.*—Suffer me to add, that the *different Cases* of those to whom you preach, must be considered, and an Application made to them accordingly. It must be your Endeavour to guide the Flock committed to your Charge in the right Way, and to consult their Safety. You must provide wholesome Food for their Souls, and furnish them with the best Defence you can against the World, the Devil, and the Flesh, that they may not be ruin'd by these Enemies.

As to the *Manner* of Preaching, I will not undertake to offer much about it. This however I would say, that a Minister should study to cast his Meditations upon every Subject that he proposes to treat of into a natural and just *Method*. His *Diction* should be proper, plain and easy, that Persons of mean Capacities may understand him; and Men of the best Sense hear him without Disgust. His *Pronunciation* should be as agreeable and distinct as he can make it; his *Behaviour* in the Pulpit, *grave* and *decent*, becoming the Place in which he appears, and the Work in which he is engaged; and above all, *his own Heart should be suitably affected* with every Thing that he delivers. And how glad should I be, if I could always preach in this Manner! But it is a much easier Thing (I know it by Experience) to lay down Rules, than to come up to them in Practice.

Af-

After all, Sir, you will see that what I have ventur'd to advance about *Preaching*, is very imperfect. Many Things that might have been mentioned, have been omitted; and every Thing that has been said, would have been said by one of better Abilities, to much greater Advantage. But if you please to have a Regard to the few Hints that have been given; I hope they may be of some Service.

The next Thing which I shall speak a little to, is *publick Prayer*. Herein, Sir, you are to be the Mouth of the People to God; and when this is consider'd, you will see the Need of taking due Care in that Part of your Work. Though we do not deny the *Lawfulness* of *precomposed Forms* of Prayer, but are ready to grant, that they may be proper for *some* Persons, and that at *some* Times, and in *some* Cases, the Use of them may be even *necessary*; yet we could never find it made appear, that either the Example of Christ or his Apostles, or any Rules or Directions given in Scripture, *oblige* to the *constant* Use of them; nor are we able to see, that in the first Ages of the Christian Church, Ministers and People were *confined* to them: Much less can we be convinced that any have a *Power* to *injoin* an *invariable Form* of Devotion, and to require all to worship God precisely, as they think fit to order them. The Manner



## 24 *A Charge at the Ordination of*

in which *Protestant Dissenters* address the Divine Being, we think to be well warranted; and, all Things considered, most *expedient*. But then Ministers must be very careful in the Performance of this Duty: The Majesty and Perfections of that Being, to whom we make Supplication, should be well thought on before-hand. The Sins we are to confess, the Mercies we are to ask, and those which we are to give Thanks for, ought to be attended to. A *proper Order* should, I conceive, be, generally, observ'd in the several Parts of Prayer, and a warm Devotion always kept up through the Whole. As to *Expression*, I have only to say, that it ought to be such as is best suited to the Duty: And the Language of *Scripture*, if well chosen, and rightly applied, would, I apprehend, have, in many Respects, the Advantage of our own; but as to that, Liberty must be indulged. By a Regard to such Things as these, and with the *ordinary Assistance* of the Holy Spirit; as our Prayers would be such as could not offend serious Worshippers; so we need not question their being, through Jesus Christ, accepted of God. I hope I shall displease none, if I now take Occasion to declare; that I very much like to have the *Lord's Prayer* made a Part of our publick Devotion. That this was given as a *Form*, which we are obliged to keep strictly to; or that the Apostles themselves



selves *always*, or so much as *once* used it, was never, I believe, yet proved. But it being a very comprehensive and perfect *Summary* of Prayer, and no good Reason appearing to me, why we should scruple addressing our selves to God in the Words which Christ has taught us; as a great Number of our Ministers make use of them, so, I must own, I should be glad were they admitted into all our Assemblies, and the rather because I conceive it would be an Advantage to our way of Worship, and I know would take off one Objection which has been often made against it. But as to this, all must be left to their own Judgment, and I would be understood to deliver only my own Opinion; which I apprehend may be done without giving just Offence.

As to the other Parts of your Duty, Sir, what I have to say in relation to them must be dispatched in a few Words. The *Reading the Scriptures publicly*, I think, answers several very valuable Purposes; and was, it's plain, the Custom of the first and purest Ages. To have *Singing* performed in our Assemblies, in the most decent and orderly manner, and so as to raise the Affections when we join in Praising God, is what a Minister should be concerned about, as he is to have the Direction of the whole Worship. And if due Encouragement be given, and Health and Strength will allow of it, the Instructing

D

young

## 26 A Charge at the Ordination of

young ones in a *catechetical* way, would be of good Service, and a Benefit to the rising Generation.—When you enter Children into the Christian Covenant by *Baptism*, Parents, whose proper Business it undoubtedly is to engage for their religious Education, should be told (if they are supposed not to understand it) the Nature of that Ordinance, and the Obligation they bring themselves under to live as Christians, and to take due care of the Souls as well as of the Bodies of those who are, as it were, a Part of themselves; that they may not be lost for ever through their Negligence. The *Lord's Supper* is a very solemn Institution of the Christian Worship, and calls for great *Seriousness* in him that ministers, and all that join with him. And as you will do well to guard against that *Superstition*, and those *groundless* and *unreasonable Fears* which keep many good People from being in the Discharge of their Duty, and make others go to it with *slavish Apprehensions* and a heavy Heart; so care should be taken, not to encourage the *Profane*, and such as don't appear to have any Sense of Religion upon their Minds, to thrust themselves into the Communion of the Church. For it can never enter into my Thoughts, that *habitual Sinners*, continuing such, can be *worthy* Communicants; though they may *remember Christ* at the Sacrament Table. If the

the *Sacrifice of the Wicked* be an *Abomination to the Lord*, as *Solomon* tells us it is <sup>a</sup>, is there not reason to believe that such a One's *eating* and *drinking* the *sacramental Elements* must be so too? And that what such a Person does at that Time, should be *offensive* to the *Divine Majesty*, and he notwithstanding deemed a worthy Communicant, is what I am not able to account for.

There will be no room, Sir, for my saying any thing particularly about those Duties of your Office which are of a more *private Nature*; as visiting the Sick, and such as are in Affliction, whether of Body or Mind; comforting such as are cast down; admonishing the Disorderly, and the like: And therefore I shall only say, that I hope you will not overlook or neglect any of them; but endeavour to discharge them on all Occasions that may offer, and in the best manner.

4. Allow me, Sir, in the next place, to recommend to you *the greatest Exactness in your Life and Conversation*. The irregular and immoral Behaviour of Ministers does prodigious Mischief. By this *Unbelievers* are confirmed in their *Prejudices* against Christianity, and many are tempted to think that those who are the Preachers of it don't give credit to it themselves. The *Profane* are hereby *hardened* in their Sins, and *serious People* *offended* and *grieved*, and have a

<sup>a</sup> Prov. xv. 8.

## 28 *A Charge at the Ordination of*

great Stumbling-block thrown in their way. Such Ministers quickly lose *their Esteem* and good Opinion ; and from that Time, if they hear them, it is not with any pleasure ; and it is easy to see, that then they will profit but little by attending on their Ministry. It should not be thought sufficient that you keep clear of *gross Offences* ; but, if you would maintain the Dignity of your Character, and conciliate such a Respect among the People as is necessary to your Usefulness and Success, you must behave with great *Circumspection*. If all Christians are to have Regard to *whatever Things are lovely and of good Report*\*, Ministers I am sure should. The *Decency and Decorum* which you are obliged to maintain, will caution you to use even your own *Liberty* under *prudential Restrictions*, and to deny your self in many things which, perhaps, may be in themselves harmless, and might not, in other Persons, be censured as culpable. Endeavour to shew forth the *Christian Temper* in all its amiable Branches, and to walk by Gospel Rules. Let your *Meekness and Humility*, your *Mortification and Contempt of the World*, and the like, be conspicuous. *Walk in Wisdom toward them that are without*†. And let your *Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven*‡. Let your *Company* be

\* Philip. iv. 8.

† Coloss. iv. 5.

‡ Matt. v. 16.

well



well chosen, and the best People your most intimate Friends. Let all your *Discourse*, wherever you go, be innocent and inoffensive; and endeavour, with a due regard to Prudence, and as Times and Circumstances will allow, that it may answer religious Purposes. Be *cheerful* without *Levity*, *serious* without *Affectation*, and appear always grave without making your self disagreeable: Be an Example of the Believers in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity. It is rightly said by a considerable Author <sup>u</sup>, "That all Men see and observe, and make Remarks on the *Lives* of their Preachers. Even those who are not able to pass Judgment concerning their *Parts* and *Abilities*, and the *Doctrines* which they preach, can judge of their *Manners* and *Behaviour*. The meanest of the People can do this, they can discern whether the Minister be *humble* or *proud*, *sober* or *intemperate*, *covetous* or *charitable*, *loose* or *strict* in his Conversation." And if it be well considered, what an Influence *Examples* have upon Mankind, a Minister that would be honoured in his Place, and answer the great Ends of his Office, will see it necessary to set a *good one*.

5. That which I have next to recommend to you, Sir, is a *becoming Zeal for the Truth*. It is undoubtedly the Business of Ministers,

<sup>u</sup> 1 Tim. iv. 12.

<sup>u</sup> Dr. Edwards's Preacher, Pref. p. 26.

### 30 *A Charge at the Ordination of*

as was hinted before, to *defend* the Gospel, as well as to publish the glad Tidings of Salvation; and the Doctrines contained in the *Bible* must not only be *preached* but *maintained* against all Opposers. For I could never think it a Matter of such *Indifferency* as some have represented it, what People *believe* and what they *deny*; I own that all, as has been already said, must *judge for themselves*; and far be it from me, to advance any thing that may look like breaking in upon a *Liberty* which *every Man* has a *Right* to. But there are Truths *essential* to the Religion of Jesus; and these must call up all your *Zeal*. I have no Intention to enter into Particulars here; nor would I have it thought, that I am so assuming as to pretend to fix an exact List of *Fundamentals*. That which I have in view under this Head, is to call upon you to be well prepared, and always ready to defend genuine *Christianity* and the *Reformation*.

What Attempts have of late been made, to disparage *Christianity*, and, if possible, to set it aside, you cannot but know. It has been attacked by some with all the Marks of an audacious *Scorn* and *Malice*, and by others with the utmost *Artifice*. But Thanks be to God, as it has triumph'd in every Generation since it was first preach'd, so the Evidences by which it is supported, were never set in a stronger Light than they have been in

in our Days : And, I hope, its Enemies will be ashamed to persist in their Opposition, which has been made appear by learned Men in the *Establishment*, as well as among the *Dissenters*, to be altogether *unreasonable*. Be that as it will ; you will do well, Sir, to be furnished to bear a Part in that important Argument when ever you may be called to it; and to vindicate the holy Jesus and his Religion, as often as you may hear his *Person* degraded, and his *Gospel* denied or vilified.

As to the *Reformation* from *Popery*, that we maintain to be *just* and *necessary*, agreeable to the *Bible*, which is the Religion of *Protestants*, and defensible upon a *Principle* which (as has been observed) is the Right of every Christian and every Man, I mean that of *private Judgment*. And this is what I exhort you to appear bravely in the Defence of upon all Occasions. It is not without Reason I am persuaded, that the Growth of *Popery* among us has of late been the Subject of Discourse. It is well known that those of the *Romish Church*, have always distinguished themselves by a more than ordinary Zeal, for what they call the *Catholick Cause* ; nor have they spared any Cost or Pains in propagating their Religion, and making Converts to it. And without doubt *now* they have a great Number of Persons employed to spread their Principles, and by Craft and Subtilty, by relieving the Poor,  
and

### 32 *A Charge at the Ordination of*

and shewing Kindness to such as are in Distress, &c. to draw as many as they can into their Communion. You will do well therefore, as Occasion offers, to give the People a View of the *dangerous Errors* which the Church of *Rome* maintains, and of the *Superstition* and *Idolatry*, and the *tyrannical* and *bloody* Principles with which she is chargeable; that none belonging to you may be in danger of being seduced; and to appear likewise for our holy Religion against any that may offer to dispute with you the Foundation upon which it stands. If you happen to meet with an artful and learned Adversary, as you have so much the Advantage of the Argument, I can't see that you have any thing to fear; since you will easily be able to shew (having studied the Controversy with care) that you have *Reason* and *Scripture* on your side, and that *Popery* is (as a very worthy Divine has told us) "the grand Apostacy of the Christian Church; a gross Corruption of Gospel Simplicity, and a wicked Design to raise the Authority of Men, upon the Ruins of the Authority of Christ, and to increase their Wealth, Power and Grandeur in the World, at the Expence of all civil and religious Liberty"<sup>w</sup>. — But I should consider that I am trying your Patience, and therefore must hasten to my last Head; and

<sup>w</sup> Mr. Barker's Sermon at *Salters-hall*, p. 3, 4.



yet I cannot dismiss this without desiring you to remember, that I have been bespeaking your Zeal for *Christianity* and *Protestantism*, which I dare say, will be allowed to deserve it.——With respect to Points about which People may differ, and yet be *equally sincere*, and equally in the Favour of God ; I would beg leave to observe, that though you may, and indeed should, plead for every Truth which appears to your Understanding to be contained in the Word of God ; yet it would be right always to remember, that you may be mistaken ; and though you think you are not ; it should be no Difficulty with you to hope and believe, that those who are in different Sentiments from you, may have searched the Scriptures with as much Honesty and Integrity, and as great a Desire to know the Mind and Will of God as your self, and that therefore it would be a Breach of the Law of Charity to condemn them. If *Papists* will, as far as it is in their Power to do it, send all to Hell that do not believe as their Church believes, *Protestants* should consider, that it is altogether inconsistent with their avowed Principles, to *anathematize* any, because they have not Minds cast into the same Mould with their own, and can't exactly tally with them in their Notions of Things.

And now, Sir, you must see the Reason of my recommending to you a *becoming* Zeal  
E for

### 34 *A Charge at the Ordination of*

for the Truth. For there is a Zeal (or that which some People call so) which is very *unbecoming* Christians and Ministers; and such I take that to be, which is not suited to the Genius of the Gospel, and has not a generous and an extensive *Charity* to be its constant and inseparable Companion.

6. Let me exhort you, my Brother, to be *stedfast to the End*. Persevere as a Christian and a Protestant, continue in the Ministry, and resolve to spend your Life in this Service. That this is your present Purpose we don't question. As to Constancy in the *Ministry*, which is what I would particularly speak to you about, we would have you believe, that the *solemn Transactions* of this Day oblige you to it; and we hope you will never think of quitting your Office, while you have Health, Abilities, and an Opportunity to exercise it. And as you are embarked in the glorious Cause of *Liberty*, and with a Body of People, who peaceably dissent from the *Establishment*, because they think themselves bound to declare against all *Impositions* upon *Conscience* and *unscriptural Terms* of Communion; we trust you will never desert such a Cause. I do not say this to preclude you from being at all times open to Conviction: Every Man should be so. And if any Person see sufficient Reason to alter his Sentiments, without doubt he is obliged to do it, as otherwise he could not act with Sincerity;

and to censure any one in that Case, would be altogether unjust and unreasonable. However, I must be so free as to say, that if any *Discouragements* you may meet with (and you can't expect to be without them) or if an apprehension or fear of *Difficulties* of any sort, should make you give out, this would betray a *Cowardise* very much to your dishonour. Shall I add, that if a Prospect of greater *worldly Advantages*, in any other way, should tempt you to leave the Ministry among us (which, without Breach of Charity, one may suppose to have been the Case with some) such a View, and a Conduct arising from it, would be *sordid* and *shameful*. But we hope, Sir, you act upon better Principles.

I have been so much longer upon these Heads than I thought I should have been when I first set about preparing for this Service, that I shall not have Time to lay before you the *Motives* with which I purposed to press the *Advices* that have been given, so fully and particularly as was intended; but I cannot conclude without suggesting some of them.

Consider then, my Brother, that it is a *noble Work* in which you are engaged. Your Office calls you to oppose the *Power* and *Tyranny* which *infernal Spirits* exercise among and over wretched Men; to spread *pure* and *undefiled* Religion in the World, and to en-

### 36 *A Charge at the Ordination of*

large that *Kingdom of God* which is not *Meat and Drink, but Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost* <sup>x</sup>. Your Business is to instruct the Ignorant, to awaken the Secure, to reform the Wicked, to call Sinners to Repentance, and to bring them to Christ. You are to warn thoughtless Men of the Danger they are in of perishing; to encourage and assist them when they have happily begun the Christian Life, and to lend your Help in training up Souls for Glory and Immortality: And what Work can be more *excellent, useful and honourable* than this? Herein Ministers are *Labourers together with God* <sup>y</sup>; and carry on the great Design which brought his Eternal Son down from Heaven; which he pursued in his State of Humiliation, and is pursuing at his Father's right Hand; a Design which the Angels applaud, and take Complacency in; as appears by the Triumph they expressed upon our Lord's Descent, in this Language, *Glory to God in the highest, Peace on Earth, and Good-will towards Men* <sup>z</sup>; as likewise from its being said, that *there is Joy in the Presence of the Angels of God, if but one Sinner repenteth* <sup>a</sup>. Consider again; that the Master whom you serve is one to whom you and all Mankind are under infinite Obligations; and who may demand, and upon all Accounts is worthy of

<sup>x</sup> Rom. xiv. 17.

<sup>y</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 9.

<sup>z</sup> Luke ii. 14.

<sup>a</sup> Luke xv. 10.

your



your most diligent and faithful Services. Think, moreover, upon the *Characters* you bear as a Minister of Christ; and particularly that, as you act under his Commission, and are sent to treat with Sinners about the great Affair of their Reconciliation to God, you may be called (in a modest Sense, and without countenancing the exorbitant and unwarrantable Claims of those who are fond of a Power which does not belong to them) one of his *Ambassadors*<sup>b</sup>; and that you are a *Steward* in his House, and *it is required in Stewards that a Man be found faithful*<sup>c</sup>. Think once more, that if you endeavour to *fulfil your Ministry*, you may hope for God's Blessing upon your Labours, and Success in them. I will not pretend to say, that Success may be depended upon; for many eminent Servants of Christ lament the little Good they have done, and complain with Hearts full of Sorrow, that they speak to People that will hear them, and that's all; that their Strength is spent to little or no Advantage; and that the most solemn and important Things which they treat about, have no more Influence upon the Generality, than if they were only Dreams and Fancies. But one that discharges his Duty with a good Conscience, may with more Reason expect to

<sup>b</sup> 2 Cor. v. 20,

<sup>c</sup> Ver. 2. ;

# 38 *A Charge at the Ordination of*

see the Fruit of his Pains, than a *negligent* and *careless* Servant can. However that may be, your *Fidelity* will be attended with a secret Satisfaction of Mind, a Pleasure which no one that knows how to value it, would for the World part with. Think, finally, that your *Reward* will be in Proportion to your *Diligence* and *Faithfulness*, and not according to your *Success*. And how great that Reward will be, I am not able to tell you, and therefore shall only say, that it will be *satisfying* and *eternal*.

Thus, Sir, I have finished what I proposed to speak to you, and shall now address my self in a few Words to the People, among whom you labour,

Well, Brethren and Fellow Christians, you have been Witnesses this Day, to a Business of a very solemn Nature. You have seen the Person who is to be your spiritual Instructor invested in his Office; you have heard a *Confession of his Faith*, his *Engagements* and *Charge*. Look upon him now, as to all Intent and Purposes, a *Minister of Christ*, and respect him in that Character. The Christian People should *know them which labour among them, and admonish them, and esteem them very highly in love for their Work's sake*<sup>a</sup>.

— The *Elders that rule well* should be counted worthy of double Honour, especially

<sup>a</sup> 1 Thess. v. 12.

they

*they who labour in the Word and Doctrine<sup>e</sup>. They should obey them that have the Rule over them, and submit themselves; for they watch for their Souls as they that must give an Account<sup>f</sup>. And he that is taught in the Word, should communicate unto him that teacheth in all good Things<sup>g</sup>. These are Apostolical Injunctions. And, I hope, you will think them worthy of your greatest Regard. Especially, I hope, that you will encourage your Minister by a careful Improvement of his Labours among you, and that your Purity and Peaceableness, your Benevolence and Fruitfulness in every good Work, and your strict Conformity to all the Precepts of our Saviour's Religion, will shew to all about you, that you have a great deal more than the Name of Christians. I conclude in the Words of St. Paul: And now, Brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance among all them which are sanctified<sup>h</sup>.*

<sup>e</sup> 1 Tim. v. 17.

<sup>f</sup> Heb. xiii. 17.

<sup>g</sup> Galat. v. 6.

<sup>h</sup> Acts xx. 32.

F I N I S.

*Published by the same AUTHOR.*

1. **L**AY-Nonconformity justified. In a Dialogue between a Gentleman of the Town in Communion with the Church of England, and his Dissenting Friend in the Country. The 8th Edition.
2. Lay-Nonconformity further justified. Containing a Reply to a late Pamphlet, entitled, *The Lay-man's Pleas for Separation from the Church of England answered*. In a second Dialogue, &c.
3. God to be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth. A Sermon preach'd at Portsmouth, July 27, 1718. To which is added an Appendix, containing some Remarks on a Sermon preach'd by the Reverend William Ward, M. A. Vicar of Portsmouth, at the Opening of the Organ there, &c.
4. The Nature and Extent of Christ's Church considered. A Sermon preach'd at Petersfield, Feb. 13. 172 $\frac{1}{2}$ , at the Opening of a Meeting-house, erected by the Protestant Dissenters of that Town.
5. REMARKS on a Sermon preach'd at Petersfield, June 17, 1722, by the Reverend Mr. William Lowth, Rector of that Parish, and Prebendary of Winchester. In a Letter to himself, &c.
6. A Defence of the Remarks on a Sermon preach'd at Petersfield by the Reverend William Lowth, B. D. In which his Answer to the REMARKS is fully considered, &c.
7. Seasonable Advice to a sinful Nation. A Sermon preach'd at Portsmouth, Dec. 16, 1720; being the Day appointed by His Majesty for a General Fast and Humiliation, &c. And particularly for beseeching God to preserve us from the Plague.
8. Effectual Humiliation described and enforced. A Sermon preach'd at Portsmouth, Dec. 8, 1721; being a Day appointed for a Publick Fast, and particularly for beseeching God to preserve us from the Plague.
9. God's Foreknowledge of contingent Events vindicated. In a Letter to the Reverend Mr. Samuel Fancourt: Occasioned by his late Essay on Liberty, Grace and Prescience.
10. AN APPENDIX to a Letter to the Reverend Mr. Fancourt; in Vindication of God's Foreknowledge of Contingent Events. Containing some Animadversions upon his late Letter to the Author, entitled, *What will be must be*, &c.
11. Government the Institution of God, for the Good of Men. A Sermon preach'd on Occasion of the sudden Death of King George I. June 18, 1727.